Early status reports on WAC call for engagement with the disciplines, robust research about writing, and a transformation from missionary work to a more wide-ranging model. A Taxonomy of WAC describes common characteristics of WAC programs as well as organizing those characteristics into a progression from initiation to change agency.

A number of scholars have written passionately and well about writing across the curriculum (WAC) as a pedagogical movement (e.g., Barbara Walvoord, Toby Fulwiler and Art Young, Elaine Maimon). Others have offered models that describe stages of WAC development on individual campuses (e.g., Donna LeCourt, Susan H. McLeod, David Russell, Chris Thaiss et al.). These thoughtful analyses focus on the innovative contributions of WAC: the write-to-learn and learn-to-write approaches to pedagogy, the emphasis on faculty development, the necessity of quality leadership, the maturation of a WAC philosophy, and, above all, the message that inoculation via one writing course is insufficient to prepare students for writing expectations in the academy and beyond. Others have warned of the dangers confronting early WAC programs. Becoming a functionary of general education, for example, as Robert Jones and Joseph J. Comprone warned in 1993, would cut WAC off from the disciplines,
limiting its potential to sustain itself, let alone to become a more influential actor within the academy: “permanent success in the WAC movement will be established only when writing faculty and those from other disciplines meet half way, creating a curricular and pedagogical dialogue that is based on and reinforced by research” (61). In accounting for WAC, these contributions speak more or less from within WAC, and from within the field of composition studies broadly conceived. Answering Jones and Comprone’s call, however, involves reaching beyond a community defined by writing expertise and engaging in a broader set of institutional agendas. In the decades since Jones and Comprone raised that warning flag, WAC has indeed progressed beyond the 1993 state of the art. We hope to take stock of that progress in a way that profits not only WAC programs but perhaps a range of cross-curricular, competency-based initiatives.

As WAC’s thirty-plus-year history argues, the pedagogy and associated philosophy have become widespread, yet WAC as a phenomenon does not possess a single, identifiable structure; instead, it varies in its development and its manifestation from campus to campus. We write as heirs of the tradition identified above, as veterans of healthy WAC programs that combine for more than fifty years’ experience at two distinctly different institutions: a land grant university, Washington State University, and a small liberal arts college, Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Our particular programs have features in common, as described below, and they are also distinct expressions of possible programs in the larger WAC universe. However, they are not definitive of the field. To honor the resilience and variety of WAC programs, we offer a taxonomy, an organized classification system based on key characteristics, if you will. We do this partly out of a recognition, thanks to our combined experience as consultants on various campuses, that WAC can be attractive to faculties or administrations as a means of delivering general education or first-year seminars, yet WAC writ large delivers much greater benefits to curriculum and to students’ learning than such narrow conceptions would allow.

WAC assumes certain pedagogical moves beyond the obvious difference between assigning writing and teaching writing. The ideal of having students write more and the contrasting reality of teaching writing within a range of disciplines and genres for numerous and varied audiences inevitably causes tension unless all parties are prepared and supported. Successful WAC requires
a complex partnership among faculty, administrators, writing centers, faculty development programs—an infrastructure that may well support general education or first-year seminar goals. That infrastructure, as we demonstrate, assumes new dimensions as programs develop and grow.

Our purpose in this article is at odds with the typical evolutionary metaphor, which stresses survival and fitness and rejects goal-oriented progress. We are most certainly interested in progress, and to express that interest, we considered possible metaphors. We began by considering generations, following Walvoord, McLeod, and others, yet the idea of direct descent underrepresents the degree to which WAC programs—even those modeled on other institutions’ programs—differ widely because of local affordances and constraints. Other scholars have used the terminology of stages and levels, as noted above, yet the architectural schema implied by such terms does not capture what we have come to understand. WAC programs range widely, and successful ones change over time, so the structural metaphor is too limiting—too, well, structural. And so we considered benchmarks—a useful term as the academy moves toward greater comparability in an attempt to meet demands for accountability and transparency. Yet any attempt to define set benchmarks is again overwhelmed by the variety of programs and institutions, so that many programs would violate any description of such categories. We finally settled on characteristics, a term that is descriptive, and that, we hope, avoids an association with more or less accidental movement or evolutionary change; instead, we have delineated characteristics and arranged them in a progression that describes the current state of WAC programs nationally, while allowing for the fact that program change is more often planned and markedly varied.

Therefore, in addition to describing programs and assigning labels to types, we employ a metaphor from quantum physics to account for the slipperiness of dynamic programs as they exist within large, complex institutions. The metaphor, perhaps appropriately for an article about WAC, is grounded in quantum mechanics. In Physics for the Rest of Us, Roger S. Jones tries to explain to the nonphysicist the basic principles of quantum mechanics. One part of that account seems appropriate to this dilemma about whether WAC consists of stages, waves, dimensions, phases, or generations.

Successful WAC requires a complex partnership among faculty, administrators, writing centers, faculty development programs—an infrastructure that may well support general education or first-year seminar goals. That infrastructure, as we demonstrate, assumes new dimensions as programs develop and grow.
Quantum mechanics allows us to see that certain phenomena, such as photons and electrons, act both as particles and as waves. These phenomena have two basic characteristics: location and momentum. That is, an electron occupies a space at a given point in time. In that sense, an electron is a particle, and physicists have designed tests to locate it at a given moment. However, an electron also has momentum and in that respect acts as a wave. And again, physicists have succeeded in designing tests to observe this wave action. But the significance of the latter tests is that photons and electrons are capable of doing something seemingly impossible—they are apparently capable of being in at least two places at one time. In simple terms, we can know either an electron’s location or its momentum, but not both. If we test for location (electron as particle), we can find that, but in conducting our observation we eliminate information about the electron’s momentum. If we want to observe a photon in action—as a wave—we can do that, but we have to eliminate information about its location.

We suggest that location and momentum apply also to WAC. Location is all about where WAC is: who is doing it, what courses it affects, where to find it in assignments, what resources it consumes, and so forth—the identity of the WAC program. These are causes—or, in accreditation terms, inputs. These inputs show where WAC is, but they don’t say anything about its evolution, its momentum. And the WAC literature described in the opening paragraph focuses primarily and almost exclusively on location. Momentum, on the other hand, involves outcomes; it is WAC in action, located in widely disparate sites, moving on many fronts at once—momentum is what WAC does, rather than what it is. We find it when we gather outcomes from across our curricula, and we do not find it in isolation from other outcomes (or if we do, then we have problems of a different sort). Far less of WAC literature focuses on momentum, though Richard H. Haswell’s surely does, as one example.

Recognizing the wave and particle (momentum and location) nature of WAC allows us as a profession to develop a system capable of describing a program as opposed to its constituent components—for example, pedagogy, philosophy, and staffing. We can locate a program’s position in the context of the institution at a given moment. In so doing, we enable planning for momentum, progress toward local goals via defined outcomes.

Our taxonomy respects local conditions and the universal need for strategic planning. An institution that can describe a program by where it is and
where it is headed can make decisions about the future of that program—extending to plans for changing the type based on the institution’s trajectory. This taxonomy has its roots in a session at the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference in 2006, where representatives from more than sixty WAC programs of all sizes and kinds brainstormed a set of benchmarks, or signs, that a given program was operating successfully and sustainably. Over the intervening years, we shaped that list and added to it by looking at a variety of WAC programs, from newer to long-established. In some cases, these were programs with which one of us was invited to consult; thus, we were able to consider these programs’ characteristics in some depth. In other cases, we gleaned enough from published research or program websites to test our emerging taxonomy against the realities of more than one hundred programs at various points in their development. Thus, this taxonomy establishes a description of WAC that allows those within a program to gain a sense of place (of where they are, programmatically, in the universe of WAC programs) and a sense of potential movement (of what steps are available next, and of which might be desirable).

In representing their programs to those outside it—in particular, to central administrators in their institutions—these four types of programs represent key characteristics. The types allow WAC program administrators to portray their own efforts in a national context and to identify and pursue priorities in a language that is understood by those who control institutional resources.

Thus, we discuss four types of WAC programs, the key characteristics of which are summarized in Figure 1. Figure 1 lists the characteristics we have identified, divided into the four types as we perceive them. This list is intended to be generative rather than exhaustive, and, of course, it reflects actual characteristics of existing programs—our own, as well as the more than sixty programs represented in that initial session at the 2006 IWAC Conference and the dozens we have examined since then. Others may have features to add, and as newer programs evolve in different ways, they may create further additions to the list. Still, we think we have captured the larger, common, most central kinds of current WAC programs, and we hope that the list will be helpful to anyone engaged in building a WAC program or in certifying a program’s worth within its own institution. Chris Thaiss and Tara Porter report that despite 30 percent growth in the number of WAC programs in the United States between
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAC Program Type ⇒</th>
<th>1 Foundational</th>
<th>2 Established</th>
<th>3 Integrated</th>
<th>4 Institutional Change Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics ↓</td>
<td>Problem-based statement of purpose</td>
<td>Faculty development, and missionary models continue</td>
<td>Integration into larger agendas: institutional assessment, accreditation, accountability</td>
<td>WAC drives institutional change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Goals</td>
<td>Increase writing in curriculum</td>
<td>Need to lead others to serve WAC agenda</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching writing becomes everyone’s job</td>
<td>Essentialist approach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand difference between learning to write and writing to learn</td>
<td>Create reliable, continual archives of materials, policies, evolution of program—history</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Largely volunteer effort, sometimes with minor reassigned time</td>
<td>Program has own budget, though often on temporary funding</td>
<td>Budget grows to support more substantial presence</td>
<td>Substantial, permanent institutional funding for well-defined and established roles and personnel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dependent on good will from umbrella (provost, dean, etc.)</td>
<td>Program identity emerges: space, staffing, programming become more visible and regularized</td>
<td>At least some permanent funding assigned to WAC Funding supports outreach to faculty and students, as well as to other initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Structure</td>
<td>Faculty development model</td>
<td>Basic administrative existence or implementation</td>
<td>Established structure, with director and substantial support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vision from one leader or small group of collaborators</td>
<td>Identity of its own, differentiated from general education or other allies</td>
<td>Governing/policy committee has clear place in faculty/institutional governance structures</td>
<td>Institutional identity congruent with activities Program capable of existence independent of umbrella (provost or deans office, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People with WAC mapped into workloads</td>
<td>Faculty ownership emerges</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort of supporters or stakeholders develops (usual suspects)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interdisciplinary policy committee emerges, preferably tied to faculty governance structures</td>
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</table>

Figure 1. A WAC Taxonomy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTEGRATION</th>
<th>Move beyond inoculation model for learning to write</th>
<th>Outcomes identified in participatory process</th>
<th>Ability to coordinate with other efforts and preserve program identity and mission</th>
<th>Alliances with other curricular initiatives feed into improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on writing pedagogy</td>
<td>WAC scholarship recognized as valuable within institution</td>
<td>Faculty development part of larger context</td>
<td>Program moves beyond usual suspects, becomes widely valued resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missionary work: gain faculty buy-in for WAC goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper administration recognizes validity of WAC assessment practices, seeks advice from consultants in WAC</td>
<td>Institution patterns new initiatives on existing, valued writing model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS</th>
<th>Early success based on leadership’s energy and charisma</th>
<th>Incremental improvement, guided by careful processes for change</th>
<th>Writing infused throughout curriculum</th>
<th>Full theorizing of program(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment of range of faculty to WAC</td>
<td>Recruitment expands to include faculty from whole curriculum</td>
<td>Carefully designed assessment process with multiple, generative benchmarks</td>
<td>Begin to have signature pedagogy (Shulman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key players/founders/vision people can hand off pieces of program or whole program to others</td>
<td>Program seen as indispensable, as a source of pride</td>
<td>WAC is signature program for institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 1. Continued
1987 and 2008, only 51 percent of institutions have identifiable WAC programs (540). While the dynamic expansion indicates that new programs come into being at the rate of 7.5 per year, almost half of US colleges and universities still do not have WAC programs of any type. Thus, existing programs provide data to describe the state of existing programs, helping them to plan for the future; while the description—the taxonomy—provides a road map for the 49 percent of institutions still to develop WAC.

We use the programs at our own institutions for the major examples of the four types, not because we believe our programs are definitive of the field, but simply because they are the programs we know best. Still, both programs have moved through these four types, and each is widely considered to be a model program. At this writing, Washington State University (WSU) looks back on a twenty-five-year history of WAC and a decade and a half in which WAC and writing assessment have been closing the assessment loop, in order to generate improvement in teaching and learning. In the process, WAC has driven successful accreditation results, provided critical information about learning outcomes to the state’s Higher Education Coordinating Board, and led faculty-driven efforts to establish and address learning outcomes that go far beyond writing.

Carleton’s history with WAC is longer than WSU’s, and its progress through the four types has been more peripatetic. Carleton began teaching writing in a variety of disciplines in the mid-1970s, establishing a writing intensive (WI) requirement as well as instituting a peer tutoring program at that time to assist faculty—in other words, Carleton quickly progressed into an Established Program (Type 2—see Figure 1) but then fell into stasis for almost two decades. Since 1996, the Writing Program has changed dramatically after an internal assessment (Hardy) called long-standing practices into question in light of new challenges posed by non-native speakers, diversity initiatives, and the growth of technology. In the twenty-first century, WAC at Carleton has been the platform for introducing direct assessment through a sophomore portfolio modeled on WSU’s junior portfolio, explicitly linking faculty development and assessment; providing a theoretical basis for a program in quantitative reasoning (QuRK, Quantitative Reasoning, Inquiry, and Knowledge); and promoting other initiatives ranging from information literacy to a new program in visual literacy (Viz). All of these manifestations have been praised by accreditors and

Thus, our histories demonstrate that what a program does (what position it may occupy) and how it behaves (its momentum) may differ widely but are of equal importance.
have attracted substantial private and public grant funding. In addition, faculty recruitment stresses the WAC environment, and new faculty are encouraged to take advantage of programming and consultation about writing pedagogy. Thus, our two histories demonstrate that what a program does (what position it may occupy) and how it behaves (its momentum) may differ widely but are of equal importance.

In addition, we see this movement beyond writing as a key characteristic of the change agency that marks advanced programs, and a comparison of how each of our institutions progressed is instructive, especially given the great disparities in context between a large state-assisted comprehensive university and a small, private liberal arts college. In both cases, the analogy to quantum mechanics accounts for the greater leap required for a WAC program to move from the more formative Types 1 and 2 to becoming more of a change agent on campus, beginning in Type 3 (see Figure 1).

**A WAC Taxonomy**

**Type One: Foundational Programs**

The beginning WAC program, which we might characterize as lacking either location or momentum, includes actions familiar to anyone in the field: faculty see a need for more writing in the curriculum. Such a realization might come from within composition studies, from the faculty at large, or even from outside the university. At WSU, that need came from a 1985 alumni survey that indicated graduates did not value their writing experiences while they were here and felt ill-prepared for writing on the job. Once the need is established, some energetic, visionary colleague starts gathering resources, offering faculty development experiences, rounding up the likely suspects.

In 1986, WSU hired Sue McLeod to initiate WAC, and by 1987 she was offering the first of many annual WAC workshops. The founding of a WAC program usually consists of a number of like-minded people pursuing the same goals and hoping that they can form a kind of critical mass, enough momentum to carry their agenda forward. Sometimes, as at WSU, that critical mass can happen quickly, thanks to the presence of colleagues such as Richard Haswell, Tom Barton, and Richard Law, so that the addition of Sue McLeod provided the tipping point for Foundational WAC. (This history is recounted more fully...
in Haswell and McLeod et al.) At Carleton, however, the institution established a Foundational Program (Type 1) in the 1970s, thanks to the efforts of Harriet Sheridan, and moved quickly into an Established Program (Type 2) by creating a writing requirement that could be satisfied outside the traditional first-year English course. But the college stayed there for more than two decades before a critical mass of faculty became sufficiently discontented with the status quo for further progress to become possible (Rutz, Hardy, and Condon).

If the early proponents of WAC are lucky and persistent and savvy about their institution, then these first steps result in founding something that we can recognize as an incipient program. Location, in the form of who does WAC, is established, and initial momentum begins to mount. Early WAC literature is rife with these stories and filled with now-familiar names and publications. Walvoord (Thinking) details the process of recruiting those likely suspects, colleagues—pioneers and early adopters—who are willing to infuse writing into their courses and who, in doing so, provide models for other colleagues. Fulwiler and Young describe the early days of WAC at Michigan Technological University, including topics such as recruiting colleagues, designing workshops, and teaching the difference between learning to write and writing to learn. Harriet Sheridan lays out the early case for WAC, including moving away from the inoculation model for learning to write and advocating the position that teaching writing is every teacher’s job. Jay Robinson provides the linguistic underpinnings for WAC and emphasizes the value of writing in learning and thinking. This list is hardly exhaustive: Elaine Maimon, James Britton, Chris Thaiss (“Reliving”), and many more have written of the scholarly and administrative work generated in what our taxonomy identifies as WAC’s Foundational Program (Figure 1). Work in a Foundational Program has often been described as missionary activity: those with a vision of a WAC presence in the curriculum and the knowledge to enact that vision reach out to and indoctrinate others, and the cohort of WAC faculty grows toward some sort of critical mass that enables greater permanence. A Type 1 program, as Figure 1 reveals, is ephemeral, its activities dependent on a few key players, its efforts not yet reflected in the curriculum, but rather in the practices of a growing number of faculty. For many years, Illinois Wesleyan University provided an example of a chronic Type 1 program. Joel Haefner, a rhetoric scholar working out of the computer science department, strove to establish a WAC program in spite of institutional inertia. After more than a decade in Type 1, Illinois Wesleyan (responding to a Teagle Foundation–sponsored study of writing at several midwestern liberal
arts colleges, a study that demonstrated that Illinois Wesleyan students basically exhibited no gains in writing from their first year to graduation) won a Mellon Foundation grant that allowed it, over a three-year period, to establish a WAC/WID curriculum. That curriculum was designed to ensure that students would write throughout their years at the university and provided for developing an outcomes-based assessment plan that engages faculty in determining whether students’ writing abilities meet faculty expectations at graduation and at stages along the way. To support the curriculum, the grant also funds robust faculty development. In short, with this change in program, Illinois Wesleyan moves from Type 1 to Type 2.

**Type Two: Established Programs**

An Established Program still focuses on getting others to follow its agenda(s). Course requirements come into being—typically, some sort of writing-intensive course plan, which over time creates its own problems (White; Rutz, Hardy, and Condon); nevertheless, these innovations seem to be an obvious curricular improvement, forcing more writing into students’ learning experiences. Faculty development becomes regularized and supported by institutional funding, however scant that may be. Typically, someone gets a title such as WAC director, and that someone probably has assigned time and some kind of staff support—a WAC office appears, a place where people can access the program and whatever resources it can provide. The mission is still to spread the good word. It’s still evangelism. Because WAC now has a location within the curriculum and a more or less permanent place from which it is administered, the group of insiders from the Foundational period must move beyond the list of usual suspects and spread their practices to colleagues throughout their institution who teach the courses identified as part of the institution’s WAC program. To the extent that they achieve this goal, then the institution as a whole takes on WAC as part of its agenda.

Again, our literature features familiar names of leaders and scholars who have achieved at least this type of program: McLeod (*Strengthening*; also McLeod et al.) has written extensively about initiating WSU’s WAC program, which she saw through to the Established Program. Chris Thaiss (*Writing*), on his own and with Terry Myers Zawacki, has chronicled the growth of George Mason University’s program, another of the exemplars, which grew largely through the kind of recruitment of colleagues that is a characteristic of Type 2.
Art Young, Lillian Bridwell-Bowles, and Chris M. Anson have all described their programs’ movement from a Foundational Program, where continued existence is essentially dependent on the good will of colleagues and administrators and the energy of the true believers, to an Established Program, where WAC has a recognizable institutional presence: a director; staff; funding; a library of relevant research; a regular, predictable program of workshops; and a program of data gathering and research.

Other significant resources also show this set of early imperatives. The original edition of John C. Bean’s “WAC Bible”—the ubiquitous *Engaging Ideas*—while still the most useful tool in a WAC workshop, is a one-way resource: the writing expert helping faculty in other disciplines understand how to use writing in their courses. It is an Established Program exemplar, and just the sort of resource an institution needs as it begins to count on WAC as a permanent feature.

At WSU, where administrators were alarmed over the 1985 alumni survey, the institution spent relatively little time in the first two program types. McLeod began her WAC work in 1987 in the midst of an extensive reform of undergraduate curriculum, including a complete overhaul of general education. In addition, state accountability pressures generated an All-University Writing Committee, which ultimately contributed to a writing-to-learn emphasis in general education, created the entry-level writing placement exam and the Junior Writing Portfolio and promoted a two-course writing in the major requirement. Thus, WSU enacted a combination WAC/WID approach in an attempt to infuse writing throughout a student’s undergraduate experience. These measures were approved by the Faculty Senate in 1989 and were fully implemented by 1991. By 1993, WSU had created at least the minimum required number of writing-in-the-major courses and held its first portfolio rating sessions.

That progression was amazingly fast for a large public university, but the speed resulted from pressure from without—accountability demands from the legislature—and from smart consensus-building from within. McLeod and colleagues (Haswell was the principal collaborator, but many others also contributed to the effort) reached out to faculty across campus and to key administrators, engaging them in the common cause of curricular reform (Haswell and McLeod 2001). McLeod also allied WAC with the groups trying to improve accountability and reform general education. Collectively, these efforts moved WSU rapidly through Types 1 and 2, and the structures they
created—principally the Junior Writing Portfolio—eventually catapulted WSU into an Integrated WAC Program (Haswell and McLeod; Haswell).

For its part, Carleton moved rapidly from Foundational Program to Established Program and stayed in a sort of Type 2 limbo for more than twenty years. The values of WAC were well established; faculty were generally persuaded of the benefits of assigning writing in their courses, and senior capstone projects tended to reinforce the importance of effective writing across the curriculum. However, the gains for students were difficult to detect, much less measure. While courses offered for the “writing requirement” were available in a variety of disciplines, Carleton faculty developed no coordinated pedagogy, consistent outcomes, or assessment criteria. Furthermore, in most writing requirement courses, only a subset of the students attempted to satisfy the writing requirement. That smaller group might have to write additional assignments, work directly with tutors, revise and resubmit some assignments, or perform other work not required of the rest of the class. At the end of the class, those attempting the writing requirement received a judgment on their writing from the professor in addition to a grade. Consequently, it was possible to pass the course yet fail to earn the writing requirement (Rutz, Hardy, and Condon).

As one might imagine, both faculty and students wearied of this arrangement over time, despite valiant attempts by Writing Program directors to offer regular workshops on assignment design, responding to student writing, and so forth, as well as to make themselves available for individual consultation with faculty. As a group, faculty became less and less likely to offer WAC courses, given the extra work and what appeared to be arbitrary decisions expected of them. General cynicism prevailed among students, many of whom simply avoided writing until they were forced into a large project for their senior capstones. To no one’s surprise, such students were unprepared for lengthy, sophisticated projects, which resulted in additional work for faculty advisers. Frustration on the part of faculty committed to WAC resulted in a 1996 assessment that opened the door to an Integrated Program at Carleton (Hardy).

Thus, progress from type to type comes in different forms and as a result of various motives. WSU’s efforts combined internal consternation over the state of writing instruction with external pressures for accountability, and the resulting system has proven itself to be a proactive force for writing on campus, as well as for establishing the institution’s effectiveness to external agencies and
audiences. Carleton’s jump start in the 1990s rode a wave of internal frustration over a moribund program.

A relatively recent development affecting WAC comes from institutions within the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a regional accrediting board that now requires institutions to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for each accreditation cycle. Quite a few institutions, among them Georgia State University, Virginia State University, and Texas A&M International University, have centered their QEPs on WAC. In some cases—Georgia State, for example—the QEP pushes WAC out of Type 1 and into Type 2. In others—Texas A&M International—the QEP, if successful, will immediately establish a Type 2 program. We note the extreme variety of possibilities for moving through and among the types. Every program’s impetus will likely appear unique, but the key is that once WAC reaches Type 2 at least, stasis is neither desirable nor, we would argue, possible. Sooner or later, for one reason or another, WAC will be challenged to accomplish more, or it will fade into irrelevance. Mere existence in a persistent location is not sufficient; momentum also matters.

**Type Three: Integrated Programs**

As a WAC program achieves its own agenda, it can start serving other institutional agendas. As it does so, it evolves into what we’re calling an Integrated Program.

As a WAC program achieves its own agenda, it can start serving other institutional agendas. As it does so, it evolves into what we’re calling an Integrated Program (Type 3). Here the WAC program begins to yield results from evaluations, assessments, and so forth that are useful to other programs or to the institution as a whole. As the result of a WPA consultant-evaluator visit in 1993, WSU moved to unite WAC, writing assessment (an entry-level placement exam and the Junior Writing Portfolio), and the Writing Center under one director, and in 1996 William Condon came in as that director, charged with bringing these three programs together so they could make common cause for writing on campus, as well as to establish the programs’ physical and fiscal presence within the institution—in other words, to affirm the Type 2 Established Program and look toward Type 3. By 1998, WSU’s provost was led to discover that the Junior Writing Portfolio yielded a rich set of data about student learning outcomes across the university. Those data went into the university’s accreditation self-study, where they earned special recognition from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. WAC had arrived as a Type 3, Integrated Program because those outside the program recognized its value to their needs.
and agendas. Type 1 and 2 programs exist as more of an institutional duty; beginning with Type 3, the Integrated Program is perceived by administrators and by faculty at large as an asset, an impetus toward quality, a force driving positive change—or as all of these.

Once integrated, a WAC program is able to reach out to become important to other efforts, other programs, other agendas—and its value to the institution broadens in ways that increase WAC’s prominence and its stability. As WSU moved through Type 3, the Writing Programs’ accomplishments served as inspiration to mount a similar effort for mathematics—specifically, to promote not only numeracy but also quantitative literacy across the curriculum—and in one of life’s great ironic moments, Condon was appointed chair of the All-University Math Committee. WAC had begun to serve multiple agendas, many of which had little or no connection to writing.

Successes in assessment led to inclusion on central committees that dealt with institutional assessments, as well as to close collaborations with WSU’s Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. This kind of outreach also has a place—albeit a smaller place—in our literature, as colleagues such as Haswell, Carol Rutz and Jacqulyn Lauer-Glebov, Kathleen Blake Yancey and Brian Huot, and Walvoord et al. have described their own trips into Type 3, where the data and the methods from WAC begin to cycle back through an institution so that WAC lends support to broader agendas. LeCourt’s proposed third stage involved using students to create the kind of collaborative bridges that we are suggesting faculty and administrators should create; in effect, LeCourt’s third-stage activities involve shifting focus toward writing in the disciplines, via the agency of the writing center. Jeffrey Jablonski’s description of three stages of WAC, like LeCourt’s, focuses on WAC from inside, as it evolves toward a more complex pedagogy. Jablonski’s third stage, “Critical WAC,” as well as LeCourt’s third stage are likely to occur in our Type 2. Mapping these other attempts at “staging” WAC illustrates the difference in our intentions: we are describing the characteristics of emerging and existing programs as they engage and integrate with other departmental, programmatic, and institutional agendas. Rather than describe WAC from the inside, as Walvoord also does (“Future”), our types establish characteristics and behaviors that locate programs in the universe outside the WAC literature to date, a transition in perspective that WAC has needed to make since at least 1991 (Jones and Comprone).

Our sense is that the boundary between Types 2 and 3—between Established and Integrated Programs—is more pronounced than the other boundaries, perhaps because making this shift involves a transition from an
essentialist approach—focused on the pragmatic tasks of building support for WAC, inventing courses, and building an adequate resource base for the program—to a deeper, more theoretically grounded understanding of the program’s role within the institution and on a larger level, of WAC itself. Beginning in 1996, WSU’s program began to understand itself in a different way, to see the symbiotic connections among WAC, assessment, and the Writing Center, for example, as different aspects of the same effort. The connections between assessment data and WAC-inspired outreach efforts focused more directly on outcomes-based data that faculty across the disciplines could appreciate and understand as research. The program’s willingness to assess its own efforts and to act transparently as it invited others to engage in a variety of efforts—and as the Writing Program was invited to lend support to other departments and programs across the institution—made WAC seem indispensable to the institution. Inside the program, the people engaged in WAC came to understand that everything we did—assessment, instruction, faculty development, and more—was WAC. Outside the program, WAC became a valued resource and a source of aid and comfort within the institution. While the regard associated with value offers a prized and heady sanction, programs and institutions need to be alert, lest WAC be taken for granted. To be sustainable, WAC’s location and momentum must be plainly visible as well as valued.

As WAC programs progress through the types, the literature provides fewer examples, but still we can see how what we might call the “integrative attitude” of reaching out to serve other agendas infuses the work of this kind of advanced program. As WAC evolved, scholars such as Charles Bazerman (Bazerman and Paradis) and David Russell, grounding their work in discourse analysis, began investigating the characteristics of writing in other disciplines. That attitude shift surrenders control over writing to the practitioners in a field, rather than continuing the notion that we in an English department or a writing program somehow have charge of writing. We see a similar turn in the essays in WAC for the New Millennium (McLeod et al.), where a primary emphasis is on the role WAC plays in such areas as service learning, TESOL, writing in electronic media, larger literacy efforts, and institutional assessment. Finally, Wendy Strachan chronicles the forty-year history of WAC at Simon Fraser University, revealing a peripatetic march from inception to the threshold of Type 3.

Much of the work described in the literature cited above was unknown to Carleton College faculty, who were still floundering in a fragile Type 2 program when an internal assessment was undertaken in 1996. A range of surveys, focus
groups, and other qualitative methods found discontent among faculty for reasons ranging from a perceived decline in student writing over the previous decade to the challenges posed by non-native speakers and some less-prepared students. For their part, students were skeptical of any educational value attached to WAC; most coped with the writing demands of the curriculum, and those less confident or adept at writing became experts in finding ways to avoid it. Clara S. Hardy’s internal report of 1996 ended with an observation that future assessments should include examination of a representative sample of student writing, since not a word of student writing was read for that evaluation. Immediate recommendations included attention to methods for teaching non-native speakers, more elaborate summer workshops for faculty, clearer guidelines for WAC courses, specific criteria for earning the writing requirement, and so forth. In a passing reference, the author noted that a portfolio of work done in courses could potentially follow each student through his or her four years and demonstrate growth in writing. However, administration of such a portfolio seemed too complex at that time.

In 1999, Rutz partnered with key faculty and administrators to secure a Bush Foundation planning grant, allowing the college to bring in Condon and other national leaders in WAC to work directly with faculty on current theories of writing instruction and assessment. As faculty learned about barrier exams, pre- and post-test protocols, rubrics, portfolios, and sampling techniques, the WSU Junior Portfolio became attractive as an option worth adapting and piloting for the Carleton context.

A subsequent proposal that designed an elaborate faculty development program with portfolio assessment at its center was funded in 2000. Condon was engaged as a consultant for the duration of the grant, and a supplemental grant provided seed money for Carleton’s first dedicated assessment position. Basically, we see here another way of taking the larger step from Type 2 to Type 3. The Hardy Report solidified support from the faculty for changes in WAC. The planning grant enabled a year-long process of consensus-building that identified the need for more faculty development and for a midcareer evaluation of student writing—and, more significantly, that identified the relationships between those two initiatives.

These program details are important for their unexpected long-term relevance for faculty development and assessment in general. Not only was Carleton able to launch a sophomore portfolio that has gained national attention, but the structure of the program has been imitated by more recent
cross-curricular initiatives in quantitative reasoning (QR) and visual literacy that engage faculty in similar activities. Particularly in the case of QR, the portfolio provided a means of determining a baseline assessment of students’ performance in QR as well as an ongoing site for sampling student work as the program attempts to develop a reliable rubric for assessing QR. (A good summary of the advantages of the WAC platform for QR is available in Grawe and Rutz.)

As faculty development continues, the boundaries between “writing” and other communicative activities soften and blur. Even in lower-division assignments, Carleton faculty are starting to experiment with assignments featuring visual and audio elements such as posters, embedded video/audio clips, handmade book-like artifacts, and graphic or cartoon-based storyboards. Faculty comfort with assigning and evaluating such work increases inexorably. This is not to say that the tight critique, the thesis-driven argument, or the multistaged position paper is dead. However, Carleton students now experience a wider variety of writing experiences assigned by faculty who are well informed in WAC theory and practice—based in complex Types 3 and 4 assumptions.

Together, Carleton’s and WSU’s WAC programs moved through the Integrated Program in similar fashion, though the specific events differ markedly. Both, however, began to engage in two-way conversations with their institutions. WAC’s Type 1 or 2 conversation occurs from the writing experts to the faculty, administration, and students. In Type 3, WAC opens itself up to input from faculty, administrators, and students. In other words, WAC begins to be a team player within the institution, giving support to other initiatives and agendas and in turn gaining support from across the institution.

**Type Four: Institutional Change Agent**

When WAC outreach becomes what we might call institutional “inreach,” the program has become an Institutional Change Agent. The program has become an Institutional Change Agent, a move predicted by Walvoord (“Future”). By this point, the WAC program is simply viewed as part of the team, and others feel entitled to engage WAC in their own efforts. For example, for several years WSU had an annual inhouse grant program to support innovation in teaching and learning. Applicants regularly assumed—sometimes, unfortunately, without even asking—that they could enlist the
WAC program to help them with some phase of their project: such as design, faculty development, or assessment. The point is that as Change Agent, the WAC program belongs to the institution in ways that it has not in the earlier types.

WSU’s clearest example of Type 4 is the Critical Thinking Project, which began as a collaboration among the Writing Programs, General Education, and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. During four years of grant-supported activities, the project reached more than 350 individual faculty and helped more than a dozen departments and programs redesign all or parts of their concentrations, efforts grounded in the data the project yielded about students’ critical thinking abilities in those concentrations. By year three of the project, program leaders began to hear from faculty and departments who were using the program’s resources but had never officially made contact with the program—never attended a workshop or consulted within the program. Instead, they used materials on the Critical Thinking Project’s website to enact their own change processes.

The best examples of research on WAC as Change Agent appear in Anson’s WAC Casebook (2002), where the emphasis is at least as much on what faculty across the disciplines can tell the WAC program as on what WAC insiders can tell them. Condon and Diane Kelly-Riley write about how their critical thinking work informs WAC—in particular how it serves as a corrective to the notion that writing automatically engages students in critical thinking. Similarly, Rutz and Lauer-Glebov reveal what those engaged in WAC learn from assignments and student writing samples from across the disciplines and about how that knowledge creates a Type 4 relationship between WAC and faculty colleagues outside the WAC program.

At the time of this writing, several other programs are moving in this direction, and by the time this essay appears in print, the research that details Type 4 programs should have grown substantially: Pamela Flash is leading the University of Minnesota’s Writing-Enriched Curriculum project, an innovative project to infuse writing throughout that large university’s curriculum by engaging each and every department in designing curriculum reform and an evaluation mechanism that fits that particular discipline’s epistemology (http://www.wec.umn.edu/). The WEC project moves department by department, in a process that first describes the department’s existing curriculum vis-à-vis writing and helps faculty in that department define writing in their own discipline and establish a set of expectations for their majors’ writing. Then faculty locate strategic positions for writing courses so that students will
encounter those expectations in a reasonable sequence, and design an assessment process so that periodically the department can make any changes that students’ performances indicate are needed. The WEC project recognizes the differing needs among the disciplines, including differences in what constitutes writing, and it establishes a symbiotic relationship between departments and the writing experts who administer WEC. These characteristics put the WEC project into Type 3, but its agency in promoting even broader faculty and curriculum development take it to Type 4. Once departments begin to analyze their curricula with an eye toward better promoting writing competencies, they rarely stop there. They move on to consider other competencies, broader ones like information literacy and more specific, disciplinary ones as well.

The WEC project inevitably acts as a partner in these efforts, since it provides the original impetus, and the departments’ writing plans include resources that aid in their further reforms. Finally, as the WEC project has established its initial success, Minnesota’s administration has recognized its value and the model it provides for a large, decentralized university.

Such work stands on the shoulders of earlier research from Anson, Bridwell-Bowles, Bazerman, and Russell, but it clearly pushes through Type 3 and into Type 4. Jeffrey Galin at Florida Atlantic University is pursuing a large-scale project on WAC and sustainability in which he has gathered data on a variety of programs. Again, by the time this essay appears, his research should also cast light on how to build a program that sustains itself and that can last long enough to evolve from inception to Type 3 or 4. Chris Thaiss’s continuing WAC/WID Mapping Project reported in CCC promises to provide descriptive data far more robust than what we are reporting here, so in the coming years we may understand program types far better, and we may be able to see other models for Types 3 and 4. Meanwhile, Carleton’s Writing Program has earned an Exemplary Program Award for 2010 from the Association for General and Liberal Studies. The review committee particularly noted the program’s effective role in collaboration among faculty for assessment and pedagogy in the service of general education. Their comment provides a succinct definition of a WAC program as Change Agent.

The point, though, is that our classification types are not mutually exclusive.
contain features of Types 1 and 3, for example, and the process is similar for programs of almost any type. At the University of Michigan, a writing-intensive requirement established in 1978 has yet to be fully implemented (Type 1), yet the Sweetland Center’s intensive dissertation summer program is a characteristic Type 3, since Sweetland applies its WAC expertise in pursuit of a Graduate School agenda (helping graduate students complete their degrees more quickly). Since the model we are proposing depends both on status and momentum, this “bleeding through” from type to type is part of the model—not a bug, but a feature.

To further illustrate the quantum mechanics metaphor, at WSU WAC’s success over the past twenty-five years has led to at least two developments indicating that WAC’s momentum is not dependent on its location. First, our President’s Teaching Academy has formulated, and our Faculty Senate has adopted, “Six Learning Goals for the Baccalaureate” (Office of the Vice Provost). Among these is a communication goal, which includes writing, speaking, and listening. That goal is about WAC’s location—WAC as a particle with an independent existence. But other goals, such as critical and creative thinking, information literacy, and self and society, are not assessable without the writing that students do in pursuit of those goals, and all six goals (1) incorporate writing in significant ways; (2) demand faculty development that includes building better assignments and better course structures; and (3) depend to a large extent on written products for their assessment. This is WAC as a wave motion, existing in multiple places at once. We can know what WAC is doing, but we cannot locate WAC in this sense, for it is happening in more ways and more places than the WAC program can even be aware of, much less track or impel.

Partially as a result of this kind of initiative, WAC at WSU is now part of a newly founded Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE), a unit that originally included WAC’s old partners CTLT (renamed the Office of Innovation and Assessment) and General Education, as well as Freshman Focus (a learning communities initiative), undergraduate research, the Honors College, and the Student Advising and Learning Center. This new unit, headed by a vice provost for undergraduate education, aims to take advantage of WAC’s quantum effect, as all these programs collaborate to promote undergraduate learning. Still, even for this highly evolved program, there are apparent dangers. In merging into the general effort—neglecting location in favor of momentum—the WAC program might just disappear. Indeed, that has been the fate of the Office of Innovation and Assessment and in a de facto way of General Education at WSU. Furthermore, in the process of folding the Writing Programs into the OUE, the
position of director was eliminated—an advantage, since the program is now
under the direct supervision of a vice provost, but also a danger, since there is
no longer anyone in the Writing Programs with a faculty appointment, and no
specific WAC director. Type 4 programs are, as indicated above, relatively new
to WAC. While we can describe the benefits and risks involved with the first
three types, there are not enough examples to do the same at Type 4. But clearly,
location and momentum continue to matter for a program’s sustainability.

At Carleton, particles and waves are also in play. Having WAC as a feature
of institutional culture since the mid-1970s has defined the Carleton brand.
More recently, we see WAC’s accommodation of the QR and visuality agendas
and a new, related prominence in faculty hiring and evaluation. Candidates
for faculty positions know up front that they are entering a WAC community
and are expected to contribute. A new curriculum rolled out in the fall of
2010 assumes WAC’s role in assessment of student outcomes at multiple sites
(first-year seminars; sophomore portfolio; additional writing courses, labeled
WR2; and in the major). Meanwhile, WAC continues to dominate as a platform
for faculty development, partnering with other initiatives—sometimes in the
absence of formal arrangements.

As is the case at WSU, WAC is assumed to be a feature of the curricular
landscape for students and also for a growing faculty development curriculum,
which, in turn, is intimately linked with assessment. WAC, as Institutional
Change Agent, promotes institutional health—in this case, healthy pedagogy
and assessment for all. However, WAC cannot guarantee healthy pedagogy and
assessment without faculty cultivation of the appropriate kinds of habits (e.g.,
revision, peer review, articulating rules of evidence and genre), but once those
habits are instilled, they become more or less automatic. And because it is fully
integrated, WAC can go largely unnoticed as a distinct program; rather it can
be taken for granted and also be vulnerable to political challenge. Vigilance is
the friend of sustainability.

Such a challenge occurred in the design phase of Carleton’s new first-year
seminars. In the aggregate, all faculty agreed that the seminars should have
some shared features, including a “Writing Rich” designation. Individually,
however, some faculty claimed to be unable to teach such a course if they
were expected to teach writing as well as the subject matter of the seminar.
When pressed, they readily agreed that they valued the writing their students
were doing in the major; it was the idea of teaching new students that seemed
daunting to those unaccustomed to working with that population on writing.
With the cooperation of the Learning and Teaching Center and the committee
on implementation of the seminars, the Writing Program offered workshops and tip sheets to help dispel anxiety. As of this writing, the scheduled seminars are staffed by faculty across the curriculum who are clear on where they can get help with WAC if they need it. Because WAC—in its wave-like action—had been invisible, almost a given, some faculty simply did not recognize that they had access to resources—that there was a place where they could turn for help. The quantum metaphor fits: both the location and the influence had to surface in this context before faculty could be confident that they could try something new in their already complex WAC universe. Even as Type 4 extends WAC’s integration from Type 3, so that WAC becomes seamlessly incorporated into an institution’s approach to teaching and learning—seemingly a positive development—WAC can disappear as an entity, throwing the institution back into some of the problems that gave rise to WAC in the first place. As a given WAC program progresses into Type 4, momentum threatens to consume it, so that those who are in charge of WAC must continue to emphasize its location.

**Conclusion**

The multifaceted importance of understanding WAC programs as a range of types may be easy to miss. Most simply, each type provides a set of characteristics for internal use, and the types themselves act as larger-scale taxa. They allow those promoting WAC to inform an institution of where the program stands within a national context, according to national norms. Thus, the defined types and the characteristics within them help make an argument for success as well as for resources necessary to progress. In another sense, the taxonomy provides a comparative context for program evaluation—in effect, it amounts to a rubric for program evaluation. To identify its type, a program has to conduct a self-assessment or commission an external evaluation. In other words, the program has to initiate a formal assessment of its status and momentum to engage with assessment in a way that promotes improvement. Further, once established, this kind of program evaluation becomes ongoing and continual, and the results help the program improve and extend what it is doing. Ultimately, then, the Taxonomy is important, because it promotes the engagement of instruction with assessment in order to generate improvement: in what WAC does (its status) and in how it can progress (its momentum). The Taxonomy should help emergent and existing programs
establish a program of inquiry that can support research and administrative efforts, so that a flow of information about the program’s status continues to inform its progress toward its goals.

Types, phases, dimensions, benchmarks, generations, waves—none of the common terminology may be quite so important in understanding the relative maturity and power of a WAC program as the ability to measure “quantum” WAC. On one level, WAC must act as a particle. It must exist somewhere; its leadership is crucial, as is the formation and continual re-formation of its impacts on curriculum, on student learning. It must have characteristics—and a history. However, if all we can see is WAC’s location, then the program remains one of the first two types. It has not yet begun to have the kind of broader institutional impact that results in its being valued by those outside the WAC program and its immediate constituency—its converts. But if the wave motion is happening, then WAC has emerged from its own bailiwick. It has begun to have impact that WAC faculty and staff often have neither directly nor intentionally caused. It has achieved a quantum effect, moving in multiple places at once. It has become part of the fabric of the institution, contributing its energy to the whole, and receiving energy from the whole as well.

Works Cited


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